

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

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SCDCA Media Contact: Public Information and Education Division

1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

803.734.4200(direct number)

Email: scdca@dca.state.sc.us

ONLINE TRAVEL TIPS

With the emergence of online booking sites and online previews of vacation spots, many consumers are using the internet to plan and save on their vacations. However, with online travel as with any other purchase, you need to do all you can to ensure you don't just get taken for a ride. Here are some tips to ensure that your online planning of a real-life journey goes the extra mile.

- **Do your research.** Check reputable sources for the best bargains and service. Ask frequent travelers how they booked their itinerary and how satisfied they were with the service. Make sure you can get in touch with the company if there is a problem with your arrangements. Double-check reservations via phone whenever possible.
- **Comparison shop.** The internet is a great place to browse; don't depend on just one site to serve all your needs. Part of being a smart shopper is getting the most mileage from your money. Sometimes deals are hidden in plain sight: many airline, train, bus, and car companies offer discounts for booking online.
- **Review your itinerary closely.** While online bookings are convenient, they aren't foolproof. Make sure you have ample time to switch planes or trains, and watch for any changes in airports or stations! **Double check everything before you click 'buy'; making changes after you buy a ticket is costly.**
- **Consider before you cancel.** Canceling bookings can be expensive. Unless your ticket is refundable, be prepared to pay steep charges. And if you get a standby or last-minute fare, it may not be refundable at all.
- **Check the fine print!** Some ticket agents tack on extra fees when you buy online. Make sure you know the bottom line before you buy.

For more information about online travel and other consumer issues, contact the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs at (803) 734.4200, 1.800.922.1594. Information is also available online at www.sconsumer.gov.

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About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers.

Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sconsumer.gov.
